

INSPECTION REPORT

Raffles International School South Campus

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Raffles International School South Campus

Location	Umm Suqeim
Type of school	Private
Website	www.rafflesis.com
Telephone	04 427 1223
Address	PO Box 122900
Principal	David Impey
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-12 / Kindergarten to Grade 6
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,099
Largest nationality group of Students	Arab
Number of Emirati students	116 (10%)
Date of the inspection	14th to 17th January 2013

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The context of the school

Raffles International School South Campus is located in Umm Suqeim. The school had 1,099 boys and girls on roll, aged between four and 12 years. In the previous academic year, there were 798 boys and girls aged between four and 11 years. Students were enrolled in the Kindergarten, (covering the Foundation Stage), primary phase (including Grades 1 to 5) and the secondary phase (Grade 6). The school consisted of over 80 different nationalities including Arabs, Asians and Europeans. Approximately one quarter of the students studied Arabic as a first language and about ten per cent of the students were Emiratis. Four per cent of the students had some form of special educational need.

The school delivered a Montessori curriculum in the Foundation Stage, as well as the Cambridge Primary Curriculum. In the recently established secondary phase, students followed the Cambridge Secondary Curriculum.

At the time of the inspection, there were 76 teachers and 39 teaching assistants in the school. All were well qualified and suitably experienced. The Principal had been in post five months, since September 2012.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- The good attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science across all phases;
- Students' outstanding attitudes and behaviour and good overall personal and social development;
- The school's strong sense of community which was inclusive and celebrated many different nationalities;
- The school's outstanding provision for the health, safety and security of all students;
- The excellent educational resources, including the indoor and outdoor facilities, which enhanced learning.

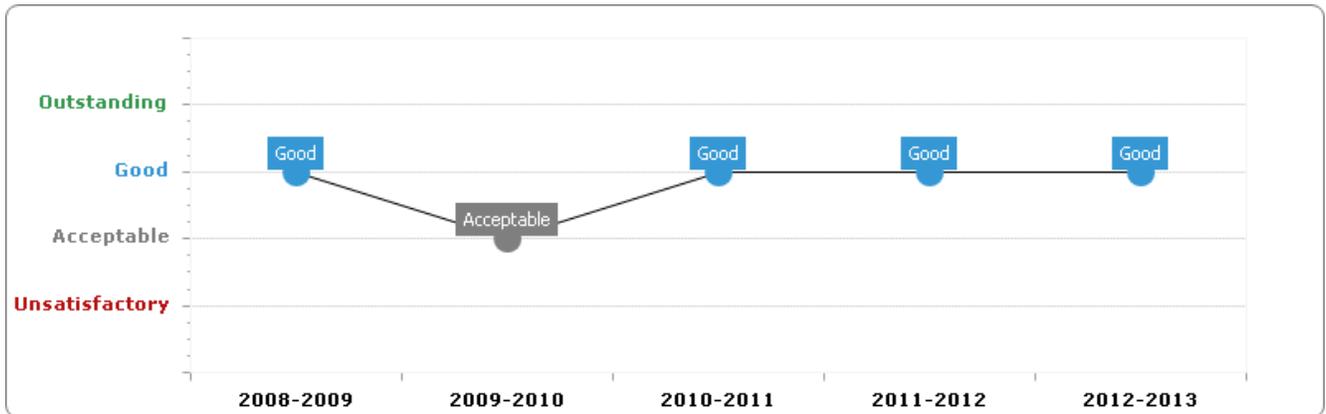
Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic by providing higher levels of challenge and engaging students in meaningful learning;
- Continue to improve the use of assessment information to inform lesson planning and set appropriate targets for students' progress;
- Improve the support for students with special educational needs by providing tasks that match their individual education plans;
- Take advantage of parental and community expertise to enrich the curriculum.

Progress since the last inspection

- Students' attainment and progress in science had improved to good in all phases;
- There was little improvement in students' progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Teaching and learning were more consistent across all grades;
- The assessment data still did not sufficiently inform lesson planning and target setting;
- The Montessori approach to learning was applied more consistently in the Foundation Stage.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
English			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good
Science			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

The students' attainment ranged from unsatisfactory to good. In Islamic Education, the majority of students had good recitation skills and well-developed understanding of Islamic concepts and Seerah. Students' knowledge of Hadeeth and their ability to make references to it were less developed. In Arabic, speaking skills were less developed, as students lacked the ability to use appropriate standard Arabic. Writing was characterised by frequent spelling mistakes and the range of vocabulary was too narrow. Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was unsatisfactory as most students did not understand simple instructions in Arabic and were not able to communicate using simple familiar phrases. Their pronunciation was reasonably accurate but their skills in reading were very limited. Attainment was good in English, mathematics and science. In the Foundation Stage, children developed their independent and enquiry based skills as well as their listening and speaking skills. In the primary and secondary phases, students' writing skills were well developed and they used language effectively to write for a range of purposes. They read increasingly complex texts fluently.

Students' progress was also mixed. In Islamic Education, students showed better progress in Qur'an memorisation and recitation than other aspects of the subject. Arabic students made better progress in oral reading and writing skills than in speaking. Reading comprehension skills were the least developed skills. In Arabic as an additional language, students made little progress overall and their expressive skills, whether orally or in writing, were very limited. In English across all phases, students made good progress in listening and speaking, and developed wide vocabularies. In the primary and secondary phases, students became skilled writers through regular opportunities to write at length. In mathematics and science, students made good progress investigating independently and reaching their own conclusions.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Attainment on external tests for Emirati students in Islamic Studies and Arabic for Arabs indicated good achievement, with approximately 60 per cent of students attaining above the curriculum expectations. These results were above those of the non-Emirati students. In English, mathematics and science, attainment was acceptable, as most students achieved the expectations but fewer than half achieved above the expectations. These results were below those of non-Emirati students. Attainment observed in lessons was good overall. The progress made by Emirati students in lessons was generally comparable to that of other students and was good overall. Students with language difficulties received good support, enabling them to make good progress from relatively low starting points. Students behaved exceptionally well in classes and around the school, and were engaged in their learning. Lessons included relevant references to Dubai culture

and heritage. The school had made considerable efforts to involve Emirati parents and there were three Emirati members on the Board of Directors and the Advisory Council.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding and their overall development was good. Students were very motivated to learn and showed high levels of interest and concentration. Students participated enthusiastically and were keen to answer questions in classes. They were courteous, considerate, polite and respectful to peers and adults. They showed consideration to others, were self-disciplined, self-reliant and collaborated effectively. Students understood the importance of healthy living and physical fitness. Attendance was good overall, although not so good in the Foundation Stage. Almost all students arrived on time for school and for lessons. Most children in the Foundation Stage were aware of their different countries and knew about major aspects of the UAE and Dubai. Students in the primary phase could talk about different UAE traditional sports and types of food. Older students could talk about the cultural aspects of their city. Students could talk about mosques and could elaborate on the Islamic features of the city of Dubai. The rich social experience provided by the school made students well aware of their own as well as others' cultures. Students contributed constructively to the community by initiating and participating in activities through the school council and the environment club. These included poster campaigns and 'green days' to promote conservation and creative ideas for fundraising events. The school had a strong sense of community which was inclusive and supportive of the many different nationalities. Students had an excellent work ethic and took pride in their work. They worked independently, persevering in the face of difficulty.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was good overall, with some outstanding teaching seen. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and used it well to plan lessons that included learning objectives and assessment strategies. However, teachers did not consistently use assessment data effectively to modify their teaching to meet students' individual learning needs. In most lessons the pace was appropriate to ensure good progress, although some teachers did not manage time well in short lessons at the end of the day. Teachers had good relationships with students and encouraged them to participate fully in lessons, helping them to make good progress. Teachers managed classes well, ensuring very good behaviour that supported learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers had high expectations, asked probing questions and gave students opportunities to think more deeply about the subject. In some lessons there was not enough challenge for the higher

attaining students. Teachers' questioning did not always provide opportunities for students to extend their thinking about the topic. A high proportion of excellent teaching was seen in mathematics lessons, but teaching was unsatisfactory in Arabic as an additional language.

The quality of students' learning was good. In most lessons, students were attentive and engaged in their lessons. They collaborated well when working in groups in many subjects, including English, mathematics, science and social studies. Students generally persevered and completed tasks in lessons. When given opportunities, for example in art and computer lessons, students worked independently without close supervision, applying themselves to their work and concentrating well. Group work did not always feature collaboration and discussion. In some lessons, students sat in groups but worked largely on their own. Many students showed good application of the topics to new situations. They made good connections to previous learning, including learning in other subjects.

The assessment of learning was good. The use of assessment information was improving as a result of the considerable work undertaken since the last inspection. The school used benchmark tests to gather a wide range of data on attainment. Teachers kept student profiles that identified their students' strengths and weaknesses in different skill areas. They used that data to identify higher, middle and lower attaining students, providing learning support to some students on the basis of assessment results. Diagnostic assessments were used effectively to provide good English language support to students who needed it. The school's data analysis recorded the attainment of students at different points in time but it did not provide sufficient information about the progress of individuals and groups of students over time. Teachers marked students' work regularly but they did not consistently provide diagnostic feedback or set clear learning targets to help students improve their work.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?

The curriculum was good overall, as it was broad and balanced, with a clear rationale reflecting the nature of the student population. For example, the UAE aspects were built into each unit and the school provided support for learners requiring additional support acquiring English. The school had good arrangements for curriculum planning and review. Most students had some choice in learning through project work or presentations and all had the choice of a modern foreign language. The school had effective systems for ensuring smooth transition from one phase to the next, especially from the Foundation Stage to primary classes. The Montessori curriculum in the Kindergarten included a strong focus on personal and social development, as well as independent learning. A very wide range of extra-curricular activities was provided

to enrich students' learning. The curriculum met most students' needs but it did not offer sufficient support or challenge for the gifted and talented students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Provision for the health and safety of students was outstanding. Appropriate policies and procedures were in place, including new arrangements for the safe arrival and departure of buses. All emergency equipment was checked by qualified contractors and evacuation procedures were practised regularly. The school site was secure, the buildings well maintained and the facilities met all students' needs. Since the last inspection, the cafeteria had received an award for hygiene and healthy menus. Students were well educated in all aspects of a healthy lifestyle, including respecting one another and safer internet use. Students were well supervised inside and outside of the school. Child protection procedures were embedded within the ethos of the school.

Staff members enjoyed very good relationships with their students. They showed a strong interest in their academic progress and well-being. Students' social and emotional development was a priority for the school. The school provided very good pastoral support for students, including the services of a trained counsellor. Teachers were alert to any changes in students' behaviour and responded supportively. As a result, students felt confident in asking adults for help. Arrangements to record and monitor attendance and lateness, including prompt communication with parents, reinforced the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

Students with special educational needs were welcomed into the school. The quality of care and support provided was good and students' needs were identified. Students had individual learning plans but these plans had too many targets and it was not clear what the priorities were for each student. Teachers' planning did not match the individual education plans; consequently the tasks and activities were not always adapted to students' needs. They developed their reading and writing skills systematically, although a few did not have the secure knowledge of phonics necessary to help them spell accurately. Students made good progress in basic numeracy and developed their scientific concepts and investigative skills well. Students

with communication needs made very good progress. High attaining students were not always sufficiently supported or challenged.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management was good overall. The Principal provided determined leadership with the active support of the Head of Junior School. Leaders were clearly focused on developing the school, maintaining high outcomes, raising the quality of teaching and learning as well as developing the use of assessment data. The majority of teachers had a clear sense of direction and a commitment to the values and vision of the school. Middle leaders were similarly focused on school improvement but not all had the leadership skills to develop their particular areas. The leadership structure was well considered but there was no single overview of English, mathematics and science or areas such as the curriculum and assessment. The leaders' capacity to improve the school further was good.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Senior leaders and governors had a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which they were addressing with commitment and determination. Improvement planning was evidenced but actions were not sufficiently linked to priorities. Improvement planning beyond 2013 was vague and plans were too extensive, lacking focus. The judgements, strengths and weaknesses identified in the school's self-evaluation mostly matched the findings of the inspection. There had been progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection report but Islamic Education, Arabic and the needs of higher attaining students remained as areas for concern.

The partnership with parents and the community was good. Parents were able to meet with the Principal, Head of Junior School and class teachers about any matters of concern. A good communication system was in place, but parents thought that the school might be more proactive in keeping them updated. Parents lacked access to short and long-term curriculum plans for what their children would be doing in school. Parents were supportive of the school's activities and parental opinions were positive about the work of the school. The parent association was particularly active in organising activities and supporting the school. Opportunities to take advantage of parental expertise were missed. Community links were developing.

Governance was good and members of the governing body held the school accountable for its performance. The governors had secure knowledge of the school, supported by regular updates from the Principal. The governing body fully supported and encouraged the Principal and leaders in their pursuit of improvements. The governing body was supported by an advisory board representing a variety of stakeholders, including

members of the community and representation from parents, but not the parents' association. The advisory board was shared with another school so that meetings were not exclusively focused on this school.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was outstanding. Excellent policies and procedures ensured efficient management of the school. Teachers were well qualified and supported by a performance management and training programme. Teachers in the Foundation Stage demonstrated clear understanding of how younger children learn. All teaching and classroom assistants held a degree, but some did not understand their roles, especially when working with students with additional needs. Internal spaces were very well used to display students' work. Excellent indoor and outdoor facilities and educational resources, including information technology, enhanced learning.

[View judgements](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	290	31%
	Last year	160	27%
Teachers	44		49%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Approximately one third of the parents responded to their survey, which was slightly higher than last year. Parents generally agreed that their children were making good progress in English, although they were less positive about Islamic Education and Arabic. Almost all parents reported that their children enjoyed school and that they were looked after and felt safe. Most parents said that their children felt safe on the buses. Parents agreed that students were treated fairly, respected and valued at school. Parents were generally positive about the school welcoming students with special educational needs but over half reported that their needs were not identified accurately. Most parents thought that the school was well led although one quarter of those responding said that they were not involved in decision making. A survey was also taken by about half the teachers. Almost all confirmed that students behaved well and agreed that students were well looked after and kept safe. Most teachers said that the school was well led and almost all believed that leaders listened to their opinions.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:

inspection@khda.gov.ae

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